

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF PLUMAS, STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD IN
QUINCY, CALIFORNIA ON JULY 08, 2008**

SUPERVISORS PRESENT: Powers, Olsen and Comstock, Thrall and Meacher

SUPERVISORS ABSENT: None

SUPERVISORS ABSTAIN: None

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Supervisor Olsen and second by Supervisor Powers to approve the following consent agenda matter.

AYES: Supervisors Powers, Thrall, Meacher, Olsen and Comstock. NOES: None. ABSENT: None. Carried and so ordered.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Approval of First Triennial Update to Plumas County's System Improvement Plan for the California Child and Family Services Outcome and Accountability System.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THE FOREGOING TO BE A TRUE AND CORRECT COPY OF AN ORDER ENTERED ON THE MINUTES OF THE PLUMAS COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ON THE ABOVE DATE.

ATTEST MY HAND AND SEAL THIS 9TH DAY OF JULY 2008.


NANCY L. DAFORNO
CLERK OF THE BOARD


California's Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan

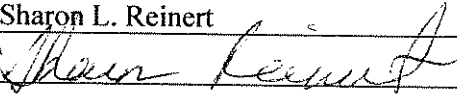
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| County: | Plumas County |
| Responsible County Child Welfare Agency: | Plumas County Department of Social Services |
| Period of Plan: | July 1, 2008—June 31, 2011 |
| Period of Outcomes Data: | 2002-2006 |
| Date Submitted: | |

County Contact Person for County System Improvement Plan

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|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
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Submitted by each agency for the children under its care

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| Submitted by: | County Child Welfare Agency Director (Lead Agency) |
| Name: | Elliott Smart |
| Signature: |  |

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| Submitted by: | County Chief Probation Officer |
| Name: | Sharon L. Reinert |
| Signature: |  |

Plumas County System Improvement Plan

Local Planning Bodies

The Self-Assessment utilized input from the Self-Assessment Team, Plumas County Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC), Differential Response Collaborative, and Plumas County Department of Social Services (DSS) Children's Services staff. The System Improvement Plan (SIP) utilized input from DSS, the SIP team, and the Differential Response Collaborative.

The Self-Assessment Team included representation from Child Welfare Services, including the Director, Program Manager, and Child Welfare Supervisor; and the Probation Department including the Chief Probation Officer and the Lead Juvenile Probation Officer.

The Differential Response Collaborative is comprised of more than 17 people representing partners across many organizations committed to prevention, intervention, and reunification including: Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC); Plumas Crisis Intervention & Resource Center (PCIRC); Roundhouse Council; CalWORKS; Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA); Child Welfare Services; Domestic Violence Services; Family Focus Network (FFN); Plumas Rural Services (PRS); ABC Family Resource Center (FRC); Indian Valley Resource Center; Portola Resource Center.

Plumas County Child Abuse Prevention Council is comprised of more than 25 people representing a broad range of partners across many organizations and sectors of the community including: PC Probation Department, PC Social Services, Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center (PCIRC), PC Child Care and Development Planning Council, Roundhouse Council, Plumas Rural Services (PRS) CHAT, PC Children's System of Care (SOC), PRS Family Focus Network, Family Resource Centers, parents, PC Public Health Agency (PCPHA), Head Start, and Almanor Basin Community Resource Center.

The System Improvement Plan Team included representatives from PCDSS Child Welfare Services and the Probation Department.

Findings That Support Qualitative Change

Child Abuse Prevention Council Data Review

As part of the self-assessment process, members of the Plumas County Child Abuse Prevention Council analyzed the CWS Outcomes and C-CFSR Data Indicators. They identified factors that currently impact this data and factors that would lead to improvement in the lives of families and children. They prioritized these needs into arenas for future activity.

Alcohol and Drug Issues appeared repeatedly as an ongoing and increasing problem for Plumas County families which has a direct negative impact on children's safety and placement. They identified addressing the methamphetamine issue and an increase in alcohol and drug issues as key to improving conditions.

Youth Transition is an ongoing concern. Under-prepared youth find it difficult to move into adulthood. Concerns for transition age youth include needs for additional life skills training, career counseling, and vocational training opportunities. Ongoing support from adults, mentors, and peers is an important factor in helping youth transition to adulthood.

Strong Families and Parental Buy-In are critical components of child abuse prevention and intervention. Additional parent education opportunities would strengthen families.

Placements that Meet Children's Needs are limited in Plumas County. An insufficient number of foster families have an understanding of children with special needs. Additional recruitment and training was seen as important.

Relationships with the Rancheria emerged as an area that everyone agreed needs improvement.

Funding remains a concern among CAPC members as they look to an uncertain financial future and growing child welfare needs.

Differential Response Collaborative

The Differential Response Collaborative identified areas of improvement in case review and planning and the overall service array. They saw a need for an initial MDT/Family Team Meeting to ensure that the family and collaborating agencies all understand the case plan and their roles in it. The increasing need for alcohol and drug prevention and intervention services impacts the ability of agencies to provide effective services and needs to be addressed. The large spread-out mountainous geography coupled with a small population affects the accessibility of services, as does the high turnover of staff in several agencies. Improved access and continuity of service was identified as needed.

Staff Input

Child Welfare Services staff were asked about their current technology, training, and relationships with other agencies. While they are mostly satisfied with all three, there were several areas of possible improvement. In technology CMS has cumbersome features that take multiple entries of the same data; within the department aides and the PHN have CMS access only through other people's computers; the SDM and CWS/CMS linkage is slow. Training is very satisfactory and staff would like more, especially in ICWA and court reporting. They would like a staff retreat. While relationships with the court are good, there are systemic issues that are frustrating, such as congestion in the court building, and the increase of requests from the court that social workers address needs outside their caseloads.

Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR)

PQCR focus areas were re-entries for foster care within 12 months of reunification for PCDSS and family reunification for Probation. Recommendations addressed areas of practice, training needs, system and policy changes, technical assistance, and resource issues.

Child Welfare Practice Recommendations included family meetings for case planning on all cases; additional pre-reunification transitional planning and parental supports coupled with supportive in-home services when children are reunified; team meetings for placement moves;

ongoing petition and case plan updates; use of victims-of-crime funds for victim/witness money to pay for counseling; and encouragement of court appointed attorneys to talk to their clients.

Child Welfare Training Needs Recommendations: ICWA and local tribal culture; social worker self-care and stress management; juggling multiple placements; and additional SDM training.

Child Welfare System and Policy Changes Recommendations focused on areas that would increase service availability in a small, resource-limited county. Internal system and policy recommendations included improvement of staff recruitment and retention; exploration of providing an in-house alcohol and drug counselor/coordinator; exploration of increased alcohol and drug testing; consideration of how to provide more social worker aides and transporters; and consideration of how to reduce ICWA eligibility determination time. Recommendations for working with partners and community agencies included considerations of how to team with other resources to increase services; increase accountability of services provided by the community; partner with other agencies/counties to offer more alcohol and drug treatment; bring Parent-Child Interaction Training program to Plumas County; improve communication with county counsel, and work with Mental Health to provide more services.

Child Welfare State Technical Assistance Recommendations included access of mental health services for children placed out of county; ICWA training; SDM training; social worker self-care training; and transportation needs.

Child Welfare Resource Issues Recommendations included the development of youth resources, including alcohol and drug services, anger management, and additional ILP services. Additional resource recommendations: develop transportation services for families, offer meeting space and services to incarcerated parents, develop residential treatment for parents, and find a new cell phone provider with better coverage for social workers. Additionally, PQCR recommended creating a housing shortage community taskforce.

Probation Practice Recommendations included monthly meetings with collaterals and community partners; a shift to a strengths-based approach; adoption of a family group decision-making model; additional reunification options for children such as extended family members and connected community members; individualized new case plans; and an adjusted agency attitude towards family. The family is seen as a hindrance to reunification. Therefore, the agency actively makes decisions to minimize contact within families.

Probation Training Needs Recommendations: require new staff to attend UC Davis Core Training; cross-train between the legal community, the Judge and Probation; how to work with families on conflict resolution; mediation for families; case plan development with families; family group decision and team decision making models; and Title IV-E training.

Probation System and Policy Changes Recommendations included internal changes to address the rapid turnover and staff shortages and shifts in partnerships and community relationships. Internal recommendations included exploration of ways to improve staff recruitment and retention through improved work conditions; increase staffing so that the supervisor does not have to carry a caseload; adopt a family group decision-making model; develop effective alcohol

and drug programs particularly for teens; offer probation officers flexible schedules to facilitate seeing families in the evening. Because staff shortages and leadership changes have resulted in high anxiety among staff, PQCR recommended work on team building and communication strategies that will resolve department turmoil and employee conflict. Recommendations for partnership improvements include work with Mental Health to extend the hours of Wraparound services and to offer services tailored to the Probation family population; remove conflict of interest when a pre-placement worker is contracted with an FFA, who may later be paid to place the child; and locate funding source for transportation (e.g., gas reimbursement).

Probation State Technical Assistance Recommendations: develop a computerized database/case management system for Probation; assist the County with developing and funding effective alcohol and drug services; provide funding for training; assist the County with employee recruitment and funding; Title IV-E training to clarify the parameters of funding; and assist the County with developing local group homes.

Probation Resource Issues Recommendations included the development of more transportation options for families; effective alcohol and drug services or counselor; parenting classes for teens; family counseling options; NA/AA meetings for teens; after school and extracurricular activities for teens such as a Boys/Girls Club; more resources for people who live out of the city area; and local group homes.

Use of Findings in the System Improvement Plan

The SIP includes plans to improve five areas of concern that came from the self-assessment findings.

1. Development of initial family team meetings is addressed in the SIP as a way to increase family and partner agencies early in the case planning process which will improve supports for families, enhance collaboration with other agencies, and empower families to take control of their lives.
2. Greater collaboration and coordination is addressed in the SIP as a way to enhance the Differential Response Collaborative, provide more effective services, address needs for alcohol and drug services, and increase supports for families.
3. Independent Living Program services for youth transitioning out of foster care is addressed in the SIP as a way to improve outcomes for youth and support their development into adulthood.
4. Improved knowledge of the Indian Child Welfare Act and relationships with the Native American community will lead to improved outcomes for Native American families and children.
5. Improved recruitment and retention of experienced social workers and MSW social workers is addressed in the SIP as a way to provide continuity of services; increase service availability and effectiveness; and enhance the professionalism of the department.

These five areas are included in four plan components:

1. Outcome C1.4: Reentry following reunification. Reentries will decrease as a result of increased parent education and enhanced alcohol and drug services.

2. Outcome 8: Youth emancipating from foster care are prepared to transition to adulthood. Youth will be better prepared for adulthood through increased ILP services. Their involvement in comprehensive case planning will lead to an increased sense of efficacy, self-sufficiency and empowerment.
3. Systemic Factor: Collaboration. Increased child safety and supports for at-risk families and more effective services will result from an increase in children's services coordination and collaboration. The development and implementation of initial family team meetings will ensure that families and providers develop a case plan with a clear understanding of their roles. A strengthened and expanded Differential Response Collaborative will increase inter-agency understanding and lead to an increased ability to provide improved and collaborative services for families and children.
4. Systemic Factor: Service Availability. Increased child safety and stability will result from an improvement in relationships with the Native American community and the development of a full and stable PCDSS Children's Services staff.

V. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

Outcomes

Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

The trend from 2003 to 2006 has been a decrease in the number of children who were victims of another substantiated maltreatment allegation, exceeding the state performance and the national standard in two of the four years for which data is available. This reflects an increased focus on earlier treatment team meetings, collaborative work with other agencies and parents, and continuing provision of services.

Plumas County has no reported maltreatment in foster care. We continue to be aware of the need for data entry of any reports that might be received.

Outcome 2: Children are maintained safely in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

The data shows an increase on timely social worker visits. In actuality, social worker visits have been timely, but did not always get recorded into the state data system. Data entry is now more timely, due to internal procedural changes. DSS ensures that visits are taking place through a series of policies and procedures.

Outcome 3: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations without increasing reentry to foster care.

PCDSS has an excellent reunification record; few adoptions; and reasonable stability for children in foster care. While there are high rates of reunification, there are also high rates of reentry. This pattern suggests that, over time, there are increasing numbers of difficult family situations that require ongoing rather than short-term services. Substance abuse and mental health issues are difficult issues to address and often require intensive long-term interventions.

Outcome 4: The family relationships and connections of the children served by the CWS will be preserved, as appropriate.

Plumas County dropped from having over 80 percent of children in foster care placed with all siblings to slightly less than two-thirds of children in foster care placed with some or all siblings. Between 2003 and 2006 there has been a shift to almost exclusively placing children initially in FFAs, and an increase in point of time placements with FFAs instead of relatives. Compared to baseline, Plumas County is more likely to place children initially in a FFA home. For point-in-time placements, over three quarters of the children are with an FFA. The downward shift in sibling placement is due to large sibling groups who were difficult to place as Plumas County does not have sufficient foster homes willing to take on large families. In addition, increased use of FFAs over relative placement reflects PCDSS's current policy of initially placing children only in homes that have been properly reviewed and approved as suitable foster family placements. Many of these children are initially placed with FFAs and then moved to a relative placement as soon as that placement is approved.

There were very few children identified as American Indian placed in foster care from 2003 through 2006, which may be a result of, among other things, families not trusting the system or staying within their own community. PCDSS needs to have greater communication with the Rancheria.

Outcome 5: Children receive services adequate to their physical, emotional, and mental health needs.

PCDSS has an excellent relationship with mental health, health, and community partners who can address the needs of children. Staff has received training in the use of SDM and SafeMeasures and uses both tools. Staff needs additional training on how to better utilize tools and work in conjunction with the differential response model.

Outcome 6: Children receive services appropriate to their educational needs.

PCDSS works with Plumas Unified School District and the foster youth educational liaison, who are responsible for assessing each child's educational needs and to ensure appropriate educational placement, and services as defined by their IEP.

Outcome 7: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Plumas County has a variety of services available to families, including family advocates located at family resource centers in each community; home visitation through a variety of home visitors, including the newborn house calls program, public health nurses, and Family Focus Network in-home educators; and parenting classes. Child welfare continues to explore with their community partners the means to improve and implement services needed by families to enhance their capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Outcome 8: Youth emancipating from foster care are prepared to transition to adulthood.

Plumas County contracts with Plumas Crisis Intervention Resource Center (PCIRC) for Independent Living Services. Other agencies, such as mental health and the Alliance for Workforce Development, provide some services. The Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) was initiated in 2004.

This is an area that requires focus and improvements. Housing and available mentoring remains a serious problem. Once children age out of the foster care system there are very few supports available to them. During the past year, ILP has faltered somewhat due to staff illness and turnover. There is need for a fulltime ILP coordinator. This is a funding issue as Plumas County receives minimal funds for this program. Plumas County has received approval to implement the THP+ program to provide support to transitioned foster youth. However, initially we were approved for only two slots.

A. Discussion of System Strengths and Areas Needing Improvements

1. Strengths of System

The combination of the commitment of DSS and other agencies to improving conditions for children and family, and conditions inherent in a small rural community provide a number of strengths.

Small County Advantage. People know each other in small communities. This facilitates formal and informal access to the child welfare system by community-based organizations. Professionals in the community have often worked at more than one agency during their careers, which facilitates collaboration and coordination of services.

DSS social workers provide close support. Often with this close support, families are able to make remarkable progress that tends to lead to high reunification rates. Once reunification takes place these same factors can lead to a high reentry rate as the worker is in the same community often and therefore becomes aware of incidents that would easily be lost in a larger community.

Differential Response Collaboration. The development of the Differential Response Collaboration across agencies has created a team focus that allows for better coordination of services to families. This collaboration has demonstrated the willingness of diverse agencies to work together to improve outcomes for children and families.

Cross Agency Discussion and Access at the Managerial Level. People who come together to make decisions about families in community forums have the authority to commit resources to problem solving. Program Managers and Directors of county agencies are involved in a number of cross agency collaborations such as the Children's System of Care and Management Council.

Additional Strengths

- Accountability by professionals to parents, system, staff, and resources. Agencies are not large bureaucracies in Plumas County. Directors know where the resources are going. Oversight and communication are easy to maintain due to smallness of the agencies and the communication between the agencies.
- Open communication and access among departments at the managerial level and at the line staff level.
- Staff across agencies who are dedicated to improving the lives of their clients and willing to work together to develop creative solutions in a county with limited resources.
- A large number of diverse services given the small size of the county.
- A therapist from mental health attends child welfare staffings on a bi-monthly basis, which allows for a clearer understanding of the needs of the client and closer coordination of services.

2. Areas Needing Improvement

Treatment Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings. Plumas County now has a standardized, comprehensive assessment approach to safety through the use of Structured Decision-Making. Referrals are made in accordance with family need and through the procedures developed by the Differential Response Collaborative. An initial Treatment MDT meeting is essential to help families quickly connect with the necessary services and provide the family and service providers with common goals and a realistic family plan to reach those goals. Currently, treatment MDT meetings are held, but not consistently, and not all meetings are early enough in the treatment process to provide the best care for families.

Service Fragmentation and Coordination. While Plumas County has made great strides in developing good working relationships across agencies, there is always a need for continued focus on coordination of services. The Differential Response Collaborative is developing a system that can be in place prior to the emergence of a crisis situation. The gap between formal/professional systems and informal/community systems must be bridged by integrating community services into the care plan and enabling the community to be more responsible for the care of families/children.

The Differential Response Collaborative needs to continue to expand its work to build teams across agencies to increase services. Additionally, PCDSS and the Collaborative need to find ways to increase accountability for services such as sharing progress reports on services, outcome evaluations, and updates on availability of services for referrals. Consistent data entry is slowly being implemented.

Transitioning Youth. This is an area that requires additional attention. The Transitional Housing Placement Program currently exists, and PCDSS's THP Plus program is expected to be implemented in 2008. However, transitional youth require additional ILP services such as consistent support, educational opportunities, and mentoring.

ICWA Process. PCDSS recognizes the need for additional training in the ICWA process and in understanding local tribal culture. Both staff and the PQCR recommended additional training in this area. The relationship with the Roundhouse Council is good, but PCDSS would like to see improved working relationships with the Native American community.

Foster Homes. The overall number of foster homes is inadequate (at times) to place all children from a family unit together. Sometimes children are placed outside of Plumas County because there are no homes available to meet the needs of the children.

There is an increase in the number of special needs children and there are insufficient families for them, especially for children with behavioral problems or mental illness.

Support for Families. At-risk families need additional supports to prevent abuse and neglect. Parents need services so they can work with difficult children – such as Parent Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT). Additional supports, such as mentors, are needed for teens, young mothers, families, and children.

Families need earlier and more intensive interventions at the time of referral. Additional long-term supports, such as additional wraparound services, strength-based family-centered supportive services are also needed.

Families also need economic supports including employment, affordable housing, transportation, and affordable day care.

Staff Recruitment and Retention. Over the past three years, CWS has experienced a complete turnover in staff. PCDSS is currently 60% understaffed. When CWS is not fully staffed, everyone works more hours and experiences greater stress. When the staff does increase, there is a substantial amount of training and acclimation time before new staff is ready to take on a full caseload. The PQCR recommended consideration of ways to improve staff recruitment and retention; self-care and stress management training for social workers; increased number of aides and transporters; and increased coordination with other agencies to provide services.

Drug and Alcohol Services. In FY 2006, over 49% of this Department's referrals involved drug and alcohol issues such as the availability and use of illicit drugs such as methamphetamine or continued alcohol abuse. The small community precludes persons in recovery from severing ties with old acquaintances, drug involved family members and friends. There are very limited drug and alcohol services available. Until Plumas County develops better drug and alcohol services, the incidence of relapse and concomitant incidences of child abuse and neglect will continue to rise. The community has formed the Drug Abuse Prevention Coalition and has developed the Plumas County Strategic Plan for Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention to begin to address this concern.

Funding. Additional funding is needed to address differential response and to develop most of the areas that need improvement.

B. Areas for further exploration through the Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR)

PCDSS participates in the regional meetings because sharing information and hearing how others are conducting business provides more ways that improvements can always be made. As a small county, PCDSS does not have the resources such as staff analysts available to research and write policies and procedures. Therefore PCDSS is open to a Peer Quality Case Review. The first PQCR detailed the improvements made and the areas requiring more work. The next PQCR will be in 2009 and the issues to be explored at that time will be determined by the progress made, and issues discovered, through the next three years.

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| Outcome/Systemic Factor: C1.4 Reentry Following Reunification (Exit Cohort): percentage of children reentering foster care within 12 months of a reunification discharge. | | | | | |
| County's Current Performance: While Plumas County has an excellent reunification record, it exceeds the national standard and statewide percentages in children reentering foster care within 12 months of a reunification discharge. Compared to the baseline, the county has a slight (3.1%) increase in reunification for the most recent data. Compared to the baseline, there is a 55.4% increase in reentry to foster care. In 2002, 7 out of 29 children reentered; in 2005, 6 out of 16 children reentered care. | | | | | |
| Improvement Goal 1.0 Social workers and agency partners provide increased supports to families and children to reduce reentries to foster care. | | | | | |
| Strategy 1. 1 PCDSS supports additional parent education efforts in the community | | | Strategy Rationale Provision of parenting education has been fragmented and inconsistent. It has, therefore, been difficult to maintain a high level of participation by the parents. Knowledge of appropriate discipline techniques and methods of evidence based parenting models will assist parents in raising their children in a safe and stable manner. | | |
| Milestone | 1.1.1 Maintain a contract with local non-profit to provide consistent, evidence-based parenting classes. | Timeframe | Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008) | Assigned to Child Welfare Program Manager | |
| | 1.1.2 Ensure that Social Workers and Probation Officers refer clients to the parenting classes and follow-up to ensure attendance. | | Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008) | Child Welfare Supervisor Lead Juvenile Probation Officer | |
| Strategy 1. 2 Additional drug and alcohol services are provided for children and families. Social Services and the Probation Department will work with the Drug and Alcohol Department, local nonprofits and District Attorney to obtain and increase services. | | | Strategy Rationale Substance abuse is involved in almost half of the Department's referrals. Providing additional alcohol and drug services will increase the likelihood that parents become clean and sober. They will then be better able to effectively parent their children. | | |
| Milestone | 1.2.1. Probation Department and Social Services Department will participate in planning activities for a Unified Family Court so that families who are involved in several court proceedings usually due to drug abuse can be seen in one unified proceeding. These planning activities will include exploration of expanded drug and alcohol services | Timeframe | Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008) | Assigned to Child Welfare Supervisor Chief Probation Officer | |
| | 1.2.2 Participation in the Unified Family Court | | Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008) | Child Welfare Supervisor Chief Probation Officer | |
| | 1.2.3 Contract with nonprofit to provide expanded services | | Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008) | Chief Probation Officer | |

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| Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals. |
| Continued support of families who have been reunified has been identified as needed. Family Maintenance Services should be extended even longer than the usual six-twelve month period. There is a lack of supportive services for reunified families. Also, increased emphasis should be placed on ensuring that families are made aware of the resources that are available. |
| Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. |
| We have a number of new services staff. They must be educated regarding recidivism rates, supportive resources in the community, and Differential Response. |
| Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. |
| Our community partners must be willing to commit to supporting aftercare plans for families. They must maintain tracking and reporting systems in order to follow the aftercare progress of those who are referred to them and they must continue to participate in case conferencing. |
| Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. |
| Funding for our community partners is always an issue. |

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| Outcome/Systemic Factor: Outcome 8: Youth emancipating from foster care are prepared to transition to adulthood. | | | | | |
| County's Current Performance: Plumas County is committed to working towards improving services for youth currently in foster care and those who are transitioning out of foster care. Services for transitional age youth have expanded to include the Transitional Housing Placement Program. Plumas County has not implemented the Transitional Housing-Plus Program. The Independent Living Program (ILP) provides a coordinator who works with transitional age youth and emancipated foster youth; however this position has had to be part-time due to the limited funding received by our small, rural county. Effective February 2008, the ILP Coordinator position was elevated to a full-time position through a joint effort of Social Services and Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center. | | | | | |
| Improvement Goal 1.0 Provide additional structural supports for the Independent Living Program. | | | | | |
| Strategy 1.1 The Independent Living Program Coordinator receives training and support. | | | Strategy Rationale Plumas County Social Services/Probation Department has an average of 24 ILP eligible foster youth per month. Providing the ILP coordinator with additional training and supports will ensure enhanced support and service coordination required for youth to make a successful transition to adulthood. | | |
| Milestone | 1.1.1 ILP Coordinator, Child Welfare Supervisor, Lead Juvenile Probation will establish and maintain a quarterly meeting schedule. | Timeframe | | Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008) and ongoing | Assigned to ILP Coordinator Child Welfare Supervisor Lead Juvenile Probation Officer |
| | 1.1.2 ILP Coordinator has opportunity to attend the UC-Davis ILP Institute. | | | Quarter 5 (Jun-Sep 2009) | |
| Strategy 1.2 Coordinate process and outcome data tracking for ILP services. | | | Strategy Rationale Currently data on ILP youth is in a variety of sources, including foster family agencies, transitional housing programs, and the nonprofit contracted to provide ILP services. Development of a coordinated data tracking system will provide information for better outcomes for youth. | | |
| Milestone | 1.2.1. Develop spreadsheet for tracking THPP participants. | Timeframe | | Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008) | Assigned to Social Services Fiscal Manager Child Welfare Program Manager Social Services Fiscal Manager Child Welfare Program Manager Child Welfare Program Manager |
| | 1.2.2 Develop questionnaire to obtain participant information from ILP youth. | | | Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008) | |
| | 1.2.3 Pilot, evaluate, and revise questionnaire and spreadsheet. | | | Quarter 3 (Jan-Mar 2009) | |
| | 1.2.4 Track all THPP participants | | | Quarter 4 (Apr-Jun 2009) and ongoing | |

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| Improvement Goal 2.0 Transitional age youth and adult partners will develop comprehensive case plans and, at the time of emancipation, will have a plan of action identifying goals, needs, and activities for the future, as well as a list of community services and a support system, in order to assist them in becoming self-sufficient. | | | | |
| Strategy 2.1 Develop an ILP/Emancipation Conference Protocol and host Emancipation Conferences for all eligible youth emancipating out of foster care. | | Strategy Rationale The Emancipation Conference will assist foster youth to make lasting connections with people in the community who will be supportive of them. It will help them to set up goals to achieve while they are in foster care and will give others involved with each foster youth a chance to see those goals and help the youth achieve them. | | |
| Milestone | 2.1.1 Develop protocol procedures. | Quarter 4 (Apr-Jun 2009) | | Assigned to Child Welfare Program Manager Child Welfare Program Manager PCIRC Executive Director Social Services Director Probation Department Child Welfare Social Workers ILP Coordinator Child Welfare Supervisor Child Welfare Supervisor Lead Juvenile Probation Officer |
| | 2.1.2 PCDSS and PCIRC agree on protocol. | Quarter 5 (Jul-Sep 2009) | | |
| | 2.1.3 Pilot the Emancipation Conference protocol with 5 foster youth. | Quarter 6 (Oct-Dec 2009) | | |
| | 2.1.4 Evaluate pilot conferences and revise protocols as needed. | Quarter 8 (Apr-Jun 2010) | | |
| | 2.1.5 At least 70% of foster youth, 15½ and older will have participated in an Emancipation Conference. | Quarter 12 (Apr-Jun 2011) | | |
| Strategy 2.2 ILP coordinator and service partners will work together to maintain case plans. | | Strategy Rationale Transitional age youth often require the supports of multiple agencies to effectively transition to adulthood. Coordination among these agencies ensures more effective services. | | |
| Milestone | 2.2.1 Social Services, Probation, and ILP meet quarterly to share program information and strategies. | Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008) and ongoing | | Assigned to Child Welfare Supervisor Lead Juvenile Probation Officer Child Welfare Supervisor Lead Juvenile Probation Officer |
| | 2.2.2 Maintain and update transitional independent living plans as needed. | Quarter 3 (Jan-Mar 2009) and ongoing | | |
| Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals. Education, Mental Health, Social Services, Probation, CASA, families, and other youth oriented agencies will need to work together with the transitional foster youth to ensure that adequate preparation has been made to provide them with all the necessary skills and supports necessary for a successful transition to adulthood. | | | | |

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| <p>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</p> <p>Continued emphasis and education is needed within the agencies, community, and society as to how difficult it is for foster youth to successfully transition from foster care into adulthood and to achieve an education, reach satisfactory employment goals, and be a productive member of society.</p> |
| <p>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</p> <p>Due to funding constraints, it will be imperative that other funding sources continue to be identified to maintain at least one full-time ILP Coordinator for ILP youth in Plumas County. We have only recently been able to elevate the position to full-time using Child Welfare Outcome Improvement funds, the ILP allocation, and a donation from a corporate source.</p> |
| <p>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</p> <p>With greater emphasis on this issue, regulatory or statutory changes may be identified.</p> |

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| Outcome/Systemic Factor: Service Availability | | | | |
| PCDSS struggles to maintain a stable and full staff. Staff continuity and experience is essential to providing effective services to families. | | | | |
| County's Current Performance: The SA identified several key areas of need. PCDSS staff turnover has been an ongoing concern, with 100% turnover in the past three years and a current social work staff vacancy rate of 60%. A more stable and full staff will be better able to provide needed services. Social workers are often offered higher pay by neighboring counties. Recruitment has been limited to local efforts and a broader approach is needed. | | | | |
| Additional ICWA training is needed. | | | | |
| Improvement Goal 1.0 PCDSS will develop a stable and full staff. | | | | |
| Strategy 1.1 Research and develop a broad recruitment process to attract social workers to the county. | | Strategy Rationale A full and stable staff will be able to carry full caseloads and more effectively provide services to families. This will increase the service availability for families in need. | | |
| Milestone | 1.1.1 Establish recruitment/retention team. | Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008) | | Child Welfare Supervisor |
| | 1.1.2 Research what other counties are doing to recruit and retain staff. | Quarter 4 (Apr-Jun 2009) | | Child Welfare Supervisor |
| | 1.1.3. Develop recruitment materials | Quarter 6 (Jul-Sep 2009) | | Child Welfare Supervisor Child Welfare Program Manager |
| | 1.1.4 Expand recruitment to include job announcement placement in major Northern California and Nevada newspapers, online, and through NASW; attend job fairs. | Quarter 7 (Oct-Dec 2009) | | Child Welfare Program Manager |
| Strategy 1.2 PCDSS will work with Merit Systems and Title IV-E to enhance recruitment and retention opportunities | | Strategy Rationale PCDSS is not competitive with neighboring counties or with other areas of Northern California for staff. Being able to provide competitive pay and status will increase the attractiveness of working and living in Plumas County. | | |
| Milestone | 1.2.1. PCDSS will work with Merit Systems to ensure that Plumas County is on the transfer list. | Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008) | | Social Services Director |
| | 1.2.2 PCDSS will work with Merit Systems and the county human resources department to develop implementation of Senior Social Worker A and Senior Social Worker B. | Quarter 1 (Jun-Sep 2008) | | Social Services Director |

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| | 1.2.3 PCDSS will meet with Title IV-E representative to explore increased educational incentives. | | Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008) | | Social Services Director Child Welfare Supervisor |
| Milestone | Strategy 1.3 Social workers will learn self-care in relation to the secondary trauma they experience due to the high stress of CWS work. | | Strategy Rationale CWS work entails high levels of stress given the increasing caseloads and the traumatic nature of the work. These high stress levels can lead to burnout, which leads to a loss of staff. To stabilize the workforce it is important to provide staff with the tools they need to effectively deal with the inherent difficulties of working with abused and neglected children and their families. | | |
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| Milestone | 1.3.1. First Thursday self-care lunches will continue 1.3.2. A staff retreat will be planned and held 1.3.3 Self-care team will be established to identify trends and patterns to be addressed through staff retreats and self-care meetings. | Timeframe | Quarter 1 (Jul-Sep 08) and ongoing | Assigned to | Social Services Aide |
| | | | Quarter 5 (Jul-Sep 2009) | | Child Welfare Supervisor |
| | | | Quarter 8 (Apr-Jun 2010) | | Child Welfare Supervisor |
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| Improvement Goal 2.0 PCDSS staff and Probation staff improve relationships with Plumas County Native American community. | | | | | |
| Strategy 2.1 All staff Social Workers and Juvenile Probation Officers will receive ICWA training. | | | Strategy Rationale An understanding of the ICWA rules and regulations is essential to providing appropriate supports to families and children of the Rancheria. | | |
| Milestone | 2.1.1 Contact Chris LaMarr for ICWA consultation and training. | Timeframe | | Assigned to | Child Welfare Supervisor |
| | 2.1.2 Explore online ICWA training options with UCD. | | | | Child Welfare Program Manager |
| | 2.1.3 Train all staff in ICWA. | | | | Child Welfare Program Manager |
| Strategy 2.2 PCDSS will reach out to the Rancheria leaders and community. | | Strategy Rationale The Rancheria has a long history of distrust of government agencies. PCDSS will create opportunities for dialogue and support of the Rancheria community. This beginning will lead to an increased ability to work together to support families and children. | | | |
| Milestone | 2.2.1 PCDSS leadership will seek out the leaders of the Rancheria community. | Timeframe | | Assigned to | Child Welfare Program Manager |
| | 2.2.2 PCDSS will invite Rancheria leaders to help social workers understand Rancheria programs and culture. | | | | Child Welfare Program Manager |
| | 2.2.3 PCDSS will invite members of the Rancheria community to participate in trainings, initial family meetings, and other processes. | | | | Child Welfare Supervisor |
| Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals. Staff recruitment and retention is vital to the ongoing efforts to meet the ever expanding state and federal requirements and to somehow carve out enough time to do actual social work for our children and families. The child welfare system is veering towards more and greater data collection, data input, and monitoring of this data and away from there being enough social worker time to work directly with children and families to ensure safety and stability. | | | | | |
| Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Due to staff turnover (due largely to the overwhelming demands we place on them), we have or hopefully will have new Social Workers who need initial and ongoing training regarding the Indian Child Welfare Act and the roles played by Social Services and the local Rancheria. Trainings will be provided by both contracting with UC-Davis and a local Indian Specialist. Other educational needs include secondary trauma work with our Social Services staff. | | | | | |

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| <p>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. We will work collaboratively with our treatment teams and the Differential Response Collaborative to improve services and relationships with our Native American community.</p> |
| <p>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. None identified at this time but as we work on our improvement goals, we may encounter a need for regulatory or statutory changes.</p> |

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| Outcome/Systemic Factor: Collaboration Child safety, increased supports for at-risk families, and more effective services will result from an increase in children's services coordination and collaboration. The Differential Response Collaborative will work towards increasing its member population, referrals, and effectiveness. The Plumas County Department of Social Services (PCDSS) will work to develop a protocol to ensure implementation of timely family team meetings. Social Services will include their community partners in the planning and implementation efforts. | | | | | | |
| County's Current Performance: Plumas County developed the Differential Response Collaborative which has strengthened the collaborative relationships within the child services community. These improved relationships have positively impacted the overall feel of collaboration in the county. Plumas County Social Services and the Differential Response Collaborative work towards decreased fragmentation and increased interagency coordination. The SA identified time constraints, transportation, and workload as barriers to collaboration. In addition, families and their support systems have not been sufficiently involved in initial case planning. | | | | | | |
| Improvement Goal 1.0 The Plumas County Department of Social Services will work with providers to develop and implement initial family team conferences for all families with a child in care. Team conferences will be held after detention and before the jurisdiction hearing using a standardized agenda. | | | | | | |
| Strategy 1.1 Development of initial family team conferencing protocol | | | Strategy Rationale The development of a protocol ensures that all staff and partners have a clear understanding of their roles, the meeting process, and the standardized agenda. | | | |
| Milestone | 1.1.1 PCDSS staff discuss and draft protocol | Timeframe | | Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008) | Assigned to | |
| | 1.1.2 PCDSS consults with legal counsel regarding legal parameters | | | Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008) | | |
| | 1.1.3 Initial family team conference protocol finalized | | | Quarter 4 (Apr-Jun 2009) | | |
| Strategy 1.2 Initial family team conference structures are developed and social workers and partners are trained to use them. | | | Strategy Rationale Social workers and partners need to understand the meeting protocol to be effective participants in the process. | | | |
| Milestone | 1.2.1 Training by UC Davis will focus on incorporating the philosophy of families creating their own objectives and responsibilities of their case plan and possible placement options that are family-focused, culturally competent, and safe | Timeframe | | Quarter 6 (Oct-Dec 2009) | Assigned to | |
| | 1.2.2 Social Workers receive training in family team conferencing protocol | | | Quarter 6 (Oct-Dec 2009) | | |
| | 1.2.3 Funding is allocated to search for and identify extended family members | | | Quarter 6 (Oct-Dec 2009) | | |
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| Strategy 1.3 Social workers, providers, families, and identified family supports (relatives/community members) participate in initial family team conference | | Strategy Rationale The combination of family engagement and community support in making decisions about the family's needs and objectives leads to better service plans and greater commitment to implement plans. This, in turn, leads to a greater likelihood of success for families. | | |
| Milestone | 1.3.1 Initial family team conferences are held with selected families within 14 days of detention | Quarter 7 (Jan-Mar 2010) | | Child Welfare Supervisor |
| | 1.3.2 Evaluation of initial family team conference structure and process | Quarter 8 (Apr-Jun 2010) | | Child Welfare Supervisor |
| | 1.3.3 Revision of initial family team conference protocol as needed | Quarter 9 (Jul-Sep 2010) | | Child Welfare Supervisor |
| | 1.3.4 Initial family team meetings held with all new families who have children in care | Quarter 12 (Apr-Jun 2011) | | Child Welfare Supervisor |
| Improvement Goal 2.0 Increase coordination of services to children and families in the child welfare and probation systems and identification of further services that can be provided through the Differential Response Collaborative (DRC). | | | | |
| Strategy 2.1 Plumas County Department of Social Services and Probation Department will hold regularly scheduled meetings | | Strategy Rationale Regularly scheduled meetings allow social workers and probation officers to share program and service information and to better understand their unique perspectives. This will lead to improved coordination of services between the agencies and thus improved services to families and children. | | |
| Milestone | 2.1.1 Plumas County Department of Social Services and the Plumas County Probation Department shall determine a time and location to meet | Quarter 1 (Jul-Sep 2008) | | Child Welfare Supervisor Lead Juvenile Probation Officer |
| | 2.1.2 PCDSS and Probation meet quarterly | Quarter 2 (Oct-Dec 2008) and ongoing | | Child Welfare Supervisor Lead Juvenile Probation Officer |
| Strategy 2.2 The Differential Response Collaborative (DRC) will increase its membership, resource knowledge, and training. | | Strategy Rationale A strong Differential Response Collaborative with increased representation from Plumas County agencies will provide a forum for mutual understanding of agency services and service limitations. This will lead to an increased ability to provide collaborative services and to improved services for families and children. | | |
| Milestone | 2.2.1 Invite additional participants to join the DRC. | Quarter 1 (Jul-Sep 2008) | | DRC Members |
| | 2.2.2 Create a flexible DRC agenda | Quarter 1 (Jul-Sep 2008) | | Child Welfare Program Manager |

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| | 2.2.3 Train new PCDSS Social Workers in differential response | | Quarter 3 (Jan-Mar 2009) | | Child Welfare Supervisor |
| | 2.2.4 Add resource sharing to the DRC agenda | | Quarter 3 (Jan-Mar 2009) | | Child Welfare Program Manager |
| | 2.2.5 Cross train members of the DRC as trainings become available | | Quarter 6 (Jul-Sep 2009) and ongoing | | Child Welfare Program Manager |
| | Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals. | | | | DRC Members |
| Service Array: | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The SA identified the need for better and increased communication between agencies, especially feedback among agencies about family participation in services. | | | | | |
| Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Families, community providers, and PCDSS social workers need training in how to use the family team conference protocol to effectively develop service plans.▪ New social workers and DRC members need training in differential response. | | | | | |
| Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ MOUs with community providers will be developed and in place during the planning process.▪ DRC members will provide services to families and children.▪ DRC members will encourage additional participation in differential response by community agencies. | | | | | |
| Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. | | | | | |
| None identified at this time | | | | | |